

ARGUS

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Jack and the Staff

Argus Contest Winners

Poetry

Fall

First Place-**4:30 a.m.** *Leslie Gregory*

Second Place-**Prelude to Flame** *Jack B. Bedell*

Third Place-**Nightwatch** *Leslie Gregory*

Spring

First Place tie-**Listening** *Jack B. Bedell*

Fulfilling Destiny *Ellen Dollar*

Third Place-**Still Life** *Tabatha Thompson*

Fiction

Fall

First Place-**Pew 46, St. Elizabeth's Cathedral** *Anonymous*

Second Place-**Bunny Gets Hers** *Gregory Burkhead*

Third Place-**The Little Man With the Hammer vs. the Invaders from Mars**
Dan Forrest

Spring

First Place-**Corn in Egypt** *Ellen Dollar*

Second Place-**Contestation** *Gynger Ingram*

Third Place-**Paint Yourself Red** *Tabatha Thompson*



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Breathing in blues, darkness
singular, separate
seeing you through
shut-eyed thoughts,
ceiled stares:
you, who exceed me at everything,
give goodbyes
spread like Jesus
across the way,
our last mid-pavement
crucified meeting:
wounds wound
round wounds,
ear pressed to your open heart,
counting sacraments seven
sanctifying grace.
remembered comforts
the indelible marks on our soul
allow unresting dreams
while fingers trace
your shrouded pillow

I carry food to the sea
fishes grow fat
eating baskets upon baskets
of my tears

Yet awake at 4:30

I cannot cry:

In forty days you will arise

And I will kiss your scars

Prelude to Flame

Looking into a midday sun,
A young man blinded with memories,
Decisions made for him,
Sinks into a sea of could-be's,
Visions of love
Fuel from within
Force him to remember.

Comes back to one choice,
Two roads--a reaction,
He succumbs to what is expected.
Life's illusion, his attraction,
Means nothing on the outside
For those who talk his heart numb,
Force him to forget.

Yet in that moment he felt,
The boy lived his own world--
A moment of loving well worth the price,
A second far removed from the swirl.
Within bounds of his mind,
The human moment freed of advice
Gives spark without force.

Leslie Gregory
Nightwatch

clove-stung lips
blue kissed by
ice breath.

lean against
cemetery walls
dig fingers
in coat pockets
while prattling teeth
wish for warmth

snow settles
on new fallen words:
heaving darkness
churning winter
inescapable friends
inexplainable loves
five women talking alone
spiced cigarettes at night.



Anonymous

Pew 46; St. Elizabeth's Cathedral

When I was little, there was this song my friends teased me and my boyfriend with. It used to make me embarrassed, but I'd laugh anyway 'cause it was fun. Whenever they'd see me and T-boy talking, they'd start:

"Troba and T-boy sittin' in a tree,
K-I-S-S-I-N-G!
First comes love, then comes marriage,
then comes baby in the baby carriage!!"

I ain't little no more and I don't even know where T-boy is. I do know that life don't have to go in that innocent a order. I'm eighteen and a half and

I been carrying a baby in me for most three months. I done finally decided what I want to do about it--not what I want to do, but what I gotta do.

I call my baby Dani to myself cause I like the names Daniel and Danielle. I ain't told Dani's papa, Nathan James, yet and I ain't gonna. I'm not having my baby. I never believed in abortion, cause that's murder, but I never pictured me in this predicament neither. Lots of folks would say this is a selfish decision, but it ain't. I want Dani--I love Dani, but to keep this child would be selfish. Dani would never live no good life cause I couldn't do her right. Ma would be so hurt. She already raised seven children and she still got two besides me. She couldn't help me and besides, Ma always said not to let the devil make me do what I did. She says it's wrong. My granny would be tore up by the pain. She thinks I'm a perfect lady and I make her proud. Nathan James would be gone before the first bill came in the mail. I figure I could have my precious Dani, and all these people would suffer. If I have an operation, I just hurt me. That's why I say it's selfish to have Dani. I'm glad Ma always said put money away for a rainy day. Tomorrow'll be worse than a 40-day storm and I'll need every bit of my savings to pay the clinic.

God, don't make nobody else wear shoes like mine. I'm so sorry, but I gotta do this. Please help me get through this trial. And God, keep Dani close to you--I know she's a good baby, even though she ain't never gonna sing. AMEN.

Listening

"Nobody ever listens," he said to himself
Knowing that the only ears to perk up
Whenever he made a noise
Were in the cornfield behind the porch
Where he spent his twenty-four hour days
Kicking the pot-licking hound between his legs,
Telling it to make something of its time
Before the wrinkles on its forehead
Covered up its eyes,
Asking it if it remembered
Many moons ago
When it could run down a rabbit
Until the sun went away
And still have the strength
To sire a litter, or two,
And remembering himself.

Ellen Dollar

Fulfilling Destiny

womb to womb
i travel
nourishing
and warm
i die over
and over again
i am born
and re-born,
each time
emerging new
fresh, transformed . . .
i greet death
and am
embryonic,
blood-life
pulses through
antique placentic
veins--
throbbing
rhythmical
rivers flow . . .
i wait,
ovate,
senile--
travel
womb to
womb . . .

Still Life

there once was a lonely woman
people thought her lowly, the reason she was lonely
she wore thick socks
that, when she took them off,
made her feet look fuzzy
she lived in a house with no heat
(thoughts of swallowing cigarettes to stay warm
entered her mind)
instead she kissed her hands

Bunny Gets Hers

"Oh pooh!" remarked Bunny Thornbrow as she was rudely awakened from her reverie at the ungodly hour of nine A.M. "These ten o'clock classes are just going to be the death of me," she added as she rolled out of bed and began the daily ritual of putting on her face. She opened the closet and after fifteen minutes of browsing gasped, "Heavens! I haven't a thing to wear!" and with a smug grin of satisfaction finally decided on a \$150 turquoise sweater and a matching \$85 paisley skirt (and matching shoes, of course). At 9:57 Bunny Thornbrow, blonde, beautiful, and painfully aware of both, took one last gaze into her full-length mirror and for the third time that morning concluded that someone as special as she deserved more than she'd been getting.

Before she reached the Porsche 911 that Daddykins gave her for graduation, she noticed one of the tires was flat. "Oh FABULOUS!!" she shrilled, and immediately, from seemingly nowhere, appeared her suitors Skip, Bif, and Tad.

"What's wrong Bunny???" the three chimed together, as Bunny indicated the problem. Without hesitation the three rushed to the scene of the offending tire and beat it to a pulp.

With an exasperated sigh, Bunny decided to hike the perilous expanse of 75 yards to her class. She reached her class, but not without incident. To her horror she discovered A RUN IN HER STOCKING!!! But, being the trooper she was, Bunny decided to attend classes that day anyway. Head held high, she marched into class and announced, "Sorry I'm late. It's been a simply MONSTROUS day!" She indignantly sauntered across the room and took her seat since only the rabble seemed to notice her entrance. Taking her cue from the diagrams on the board, Bunny picked up her nearly completed basket and began the next sequence of semi-intricate weaves. "Some reception," she thought, "I deserve more than that!"

Meanwhile, the rabble, in this instance Alfred Poindexter Dunwater (a.k.a. Advanced Placement Dunwater), wiped his nose with a well-used handkerchief and continued staring at his recently-arrived dream-babe adorned in blue-green (with matching shoes, of course). Yes, Alfred was secretly in love with our heroine, Bunny. So deeply in love, in fact, that he had enrolled in Basket-Weaving 001 instead of Advanced-Quantitative-Topics in Abstract-Calculus 9099, just to be near her.

Bunny was well into her second stitch when the bell rang and everyone began to leave. In the ensuing commotion, Alfred and Bunny chanced to collide. "YOU IDIOT!!!" shrieked Bunny as her books hit the floor and one of her nails chipped, "Look what you've done!"

"I, I'm sorry, Bunny," squeaked Alfred, "I didn't mean to."

"Out of my way, peasant!" seethed Bunny, pushing him aside. "You geeks will be the death of me," she said and stomped away leaving a trail of Young Republicans with short haircuts and paisley ties attempting to hand her her books.

Alfred just stood there. He couldn't believe what had happened. Three years of idol-worship and unending devotion had come together in the last six seconds. His gloriously envisioned meeting between himself and his Venus had indeed been momentous, but not in the context he had hoped for. It was too much for him: his recently received 'B' in Quantum Physics, the imminent cancellation of "Dr. Who" and other public television greats, and now--and most of all--this.

Alfred decided to end his life.

Bunny continued down the hall with fire in her eyes and hate in her heart. The chipped nail was the straw that had broken the camel's back, for that day, in any case. It was not uncommon for Bunny to have such a catastrophic day two, or even three, times a week, for heaven's sake! And as usual Bunny decided to forego the rest of her classes for that day as any well-bred well-off person would. "Woe is me!" she wailed, as she continued the seemingly shorter return trip to the

dorm. "Why does everything bad happen to me?" she asked with her eyes on the heavens, "I deserve more from life than this!" She shook an angry fist. A faint roll of thunder followed her gesture as if in reply.

From his stooped over position Alfred noticed the clouds that were beginning to gather. "The day I end my life it rains," he murmured as he continued fiddling with his bicycle lock. Upon freeing his steed from the rack, he mounted and started for the dorm. "How shall I do it?" he pondered, as he absent-mindedly dodged pedestrians. "Razor-blades, hanging, cafeteria food? The common possibilities are endless!" he decided. "I'm going to have to think this over."

People were beginning to scatter from the quadrangle as the first few drops of rain hit the ground. The thunder was growing louder and a cold, wet breeze sent the fallen leaves racing for shelter. Lightning cracked overhead. A sad, determined looking figure on a bicycle slowly made for the center of the enclosure and paused near the flagpole as if in thought.

"And then this geek ran into me and broke my nail!"

"No!?!"

"Yes! I could have just DIED!" explained Bunny to her roommate.

"Well I don't blame you for cutting classes. What else could you do?" said Bunny's near identical co-habitant. "Glory-be! Look at the time! You'd better hurry if you're gonna meet Jock at the Union, Bun," she finished.

"Jock..." sighed Bunny. "He's rich and cute, just what I'm here for."

"Me too, honey, but you're not gonna get a husband moping around this room. Now get going!"

The storm was at full force. Thunder roared and lightning intermittently lit the now dark sky. Alfred was leaning against the flagpole crying. His tears did little to vie with the pelting rain. Alfred, pleased with the notion of originality, and firm on his suicidal solution, had decided to be electrocuted in the storm. "This oughta make the papers," he sniffed, "...and right in front of the Student Union to boot!"

Gynger Ingram
Octagon House

A home of my own
Fueled my goals,
I want to live here alone
That I may become whole.
I worked for my doctorate degree
Seeking precious, creative spurs
Prodding me up the academician's tree,
Lining drawers with old college rosters.
The Conservative Academic background I came from
Has rendered me as Privately Reclusive as mist.
I am as Introverted and Organized as people come
With an evident reputation as a Celibate Artist.
The parlor stays neat but I use the living room,
A bedroom upstairs, my organ in the conservatory.
I gathered everything through the years,
In my preparation for a home for myself,
Over work, school, hopes, fears,
Keeping dreams off my bookshelf.
Far from society I drift
Turning away from that,
Living here with
Caprioca my cat.

Om Du en dag
nar jag ar borta
kanner Dig alldeles ovanligt glad
fast det regnar
och Du fick C pa sista tentan
da ar det bara jag
som tanker pa Dig
i ett land
langt borta

If you one day,
when I'm gone
get a specially happy feeling
even though it's raining
and you made a C on your last test
then it's only me
who's thinking about you
in a country
far away



Dan Forrest

The Little Man with the Hammer vs. The Invaders from Mars

BRRRINNNGGG!!!

YAAAAHHH!!!

CRASH!! BUZZZzzz. . .

"Yo, man, watch where you're throwing that damn clock! Hey Nick, if you're going to make that 8 o'clock, you'd better hustle!"

A weak "fuh ooo" filtered through the pillows and tangled bedclothes that covered the semi-conscious form of Nick Scrimshanker as the full force of too-much-of-what-made-Milwaukee-famous settled down on him like a cement sweat suit. Nick painfully crawled to the bathroom to check the damage.

"Must have been some night," said Jim Galloway, Nick's roommate. He watched Nick's shaky hands reach out for a double-dose of Alka-Seltzer. "Geez, you look like ten miles of bad road."

"Wish I felt that good," replied Nick. "The little man with the hammer paying you a call?"

"Yeah. You know, he wouldn't be quite so bad if he didn't shit in your mouth on the way upstairs," Nick said around a toothbrush.

"Know what you mean," Jim chuckled. He glanced at his watch. "Hey, look at the time. I'd better run if I'm going to make it to the crapeteria before they run out of flies for the swill. Catch you later."

As the door glided shut with a crash that must have rivaled Krakatoa, Nick decided he really wasn't hungry for the next couple of days anyway. Washing down some vitamin B-12 (one of Jim's surefire hangover helpers), Nick squared his shoulders for the next of his Labours, getting dressed. After gritting his teeth through a chainsaw zipper, begging his shoelaces not to tie so loudly, and buttoning more buttons than could rightfully belong to ten of his shirts, Nick began to stuff his backpack with the necessary textbooks, notebooks, writing implements, two magazines and a crossword puzzle (for that 10 o'clock survey of something or other that's a real sleeper). Nick then donned sunglasses so dark as to make people wonder where his seeing-eye dog was and, taking a deep breath, stepped out into the harsh sunlight.

"Yo, Nickie boy, cheer up! Only five days left till the weekend," bellowed a voice that could only belong to Freddie Smith, big as an ox and the kind of guy you couldn't help but like. Nick attempted and almost succeeded in turning a grimace into a smile by the time Freddie, puffing like a locomotive, trotted up to him. Freddie took a deep breath and declared to the world, "Ah Monday, my seventh favorite day of the week!"

Nick actually managed a chuckle. "Man, you were three sheets to the wind and four flapping last night," Freddie said in a slightly quieter tone.

"Tell me about it," Nick said. Getting no response, he added, "No, I'm serious. Things get pretty hazy around eleven. Did I do anything really stupid last night?"

"Does calling up every girl whose phone number you could remember and proposing to her count?"

Seeing the crestfallen look of his friend, Freddie quickly followed his bombshell with a flurry of Just Kiddings.

"No, you didn't do anything stupid, so you can rest easy. I've got to get to Econ. I'll call you this afternoon when you've returned to the land of the living." Freddie bounded off, leaving Nick to get to his History class solo.

Watching his pen scrawl a trail of ink that almost resembled handwriting across the page of his notebook, Nick came to the same conclusion that his instructor did some twenty-odd years ago, namely that Prince Barnard the Dull was just that. He spent the rest of the morning collecting such pearls of wisdom as the fact that sheep outnumber people in Australia ten to one (geography), English was Joseph Conrad's third language (English), and two pigments formed by the breakdown of dead blood cells, one red and the other green, are the reason that human feces is brown (biology).

Standing in the lunchline (Nick's stomach had recovered enough to handle mashed potatoes, some Jell-O cubes and a glass of milk), he pondered the results of his morning's dose of higher education and concluded for the 863rd time this semester that life is, in fact, a game of Trivial Pursuit. He followed this train of thought as he ran a broken field pattern through the sorority girls grazing at the salad bar, looking for someone he knew to sit with. Could there perhaps be a higher plane of existence where life was Scrabble or even the ultimate Nirvana of finishing the New York Times Sunday crossword without reference to a dictionary, encyclopedia, or the answer in the Classified section?

"Hey Nick, over here!"

Nick shook his head to clear it and started scanning the room, finally seeing Freddie and Jim waving their arms frantically at a table filled with various and sundry running buddies and nodding acquaintances, even a couple of female ones at the other end of the table from the one empty chair.

"We saw you in the line and saved you a seat," Freddie crowed.

As Nick sat down, Jim, in his best Barbara Billingsly voice, said, "Look hon, he's already eating solid food and at such an early age, too."

This brought guffaws and a light shower of partially-chewed food and even some titters from the other end of the table. The talk gradually turned to war stories of the morning's forays into the classroom.

"I'm going to fail Calc for sure," moaned Freddie.

"Why's that?" asked Jim, who was a math major once.

"The prof hates me 'cause I can't draw those skinny S integral signs worth a flip," Freddie said, demonstrating one in the air with his fork. More laughter followed. The group started to dissolve: Freddie to a loathesome Stats class, Jim to the library for some obscure research project, and the two titterers to their soaps. Nick, still listed among the walking wounded, opted for some light studying, either Poli Sci or cartoons.

Meanwhile, 48 millions miles away, on a high plateau on the largest continent of the northern hemisphere of the planet Mars in a council room atop a high tower in the midst of the capitol city of a civilization that was old when Man had yet to climb down from the trees, the Supreme High Council of Archons sat in executive session. A heated debate raged on.

The Minister of Defense, who would have much rather been the Minister of War, had just finished a lengthy diatribe against the third planet from their sun, which for the past 50-odd years had been polluting the Martian ionosphere with what, out of respect for the conservative Supremem High Archon and for lack of a better word, could only be called dreck of the worst kind. His brilliant summation ended thus: "To wit, any quote civilization unquote which is capable of producing and apparently enjoying such tripe as Tic Tac Dough, which surely must be a slap in the face to the Supreme Being Itself, cannot be allowed the smallest pretensions of existence. Therefore, gentlemen, the planet Wart (which was the closest

the Martians could come to pronouncing the name of that planet) and its inhabitants must be exterminated if for no other reason than their sheer gall."

The Minister of Culture quickly leapt to his feet, waving a sheaf of papers and citing Jeopardy and the 1958 Cadillac Eldorado as incontrovertible proof that the Wartians must possess some vestige, however small, of what might possibly be called civilization. The Supreme High Archon turned to the Minister of Defense who raised a hand into which an aide quickly placed a single sheet of paper: his trump card. Not even bothering to rise, he read the list in a quiet, staccato voice: "Bowling for Dollars, The National Enquirer, the Moral Majority, global thermonuclear war, and (this last with a look of particular distaste) professional wrestling."

Amid the oppressive silence, the Minister of Culture hung his head and slowly returned to his seat. With a terse "So be it," the Supreme High Archon adjourned the meeting.

Plans were quickly laid and construction begun on a single, immense vessels that would house the crack assault troops and their unbelievably potent instruments of destruction necessary for the swift, surgical completion of their dreadful mission. Amid the thundering roar of the multitudinous crowds, the massive warship, with a deafening roar that actually shook apart several buildings in the older part of town, left the ground and turned its enormous prow Wartward.

As the Martian dreadnaught screamed through the atmosphere of the planet Earth, the troops stood to final inspection with a grim determination in their eyes. In a small college town on the continent of North America, Nick Scrimshanker walked towards his apartment. With hands thrust deep into his pockets and his backpack riding jauntily high on his back, still pondering the direction of his afternoon's studies, he failed to notice the Martian superbattleship land directly in his path. Because at that moment he was weighing the relative merits of the Federalist

papers and Tom and Jerry, and partially due to the fact that the Martian spaceship resembled very closely in size and shape a terrestrial bottlecap, Nick Scrimshanker failed to hear the barely audible crunch as his sneakered foot ground the invaders into the pavement. With a sudden jerk of his head and the formation of that grim smile characteristic of all great men, Nick decided that he would delve into the realm of the political ideas of the Founding Fathers only if a Droopy cartoon came on.

"By God, there's nothing like Monday Night Football," said the Hero of the People of Earth as he sank into a sofa which countless naughas had given their lives to upholster.

"And good company and good popcorn to go with it," added Jim Galloway as he took up his viewing station with an enormous bowl of popcorn in his lap.

"And enough ice cold brewskies to give a platoon of Marines the blind staggers," boomed Freddie Smith, punishing his Barcalounger as he distributed cans of the frosty libations to his two friends.

As the New Orleans Saints, who had never won on Monday night, prepared to keep their record perfect, the Saviour of His Planet laughed heartily, leaned back, emptied a good two-thirds of the can, and emitted a truly stentorian belch.

Mary Doherty
Graduate

Was it for this I uttered prayers
And sobbed and cursed and climbed the stairs
Of Kyser Hall for three long years
And spent my nights in Watson's stacks
and graduated summa cum tears
That now, because of state budget woe
I work at Wal-Mart, and owe and owe?

Mary Doherty

Annie

You stare into nothingness
Past today and tomorrow
As if you know all the
Secrets of the present and future.
Your eyes, green and slanted, peer into
My face, looking for answers.
A low voice of contentment comes
From your soul and
Ends in your throat.
Sphinx-like, you sit for long
Minutes in meditation.
Are you really wise, or just
Watching me
To see if I'll
Fill your bowl with
Dry catfood?

William R. Murphy
Song For T.

The loneliness, the void
In me
Growing

We share
Weltschmerz
We know
Life's indifference

Your contrasts
Make your wholeness
This
No blind affection

I hope
Chance of exploration
Pure joy
Of discovery
Your intricacies

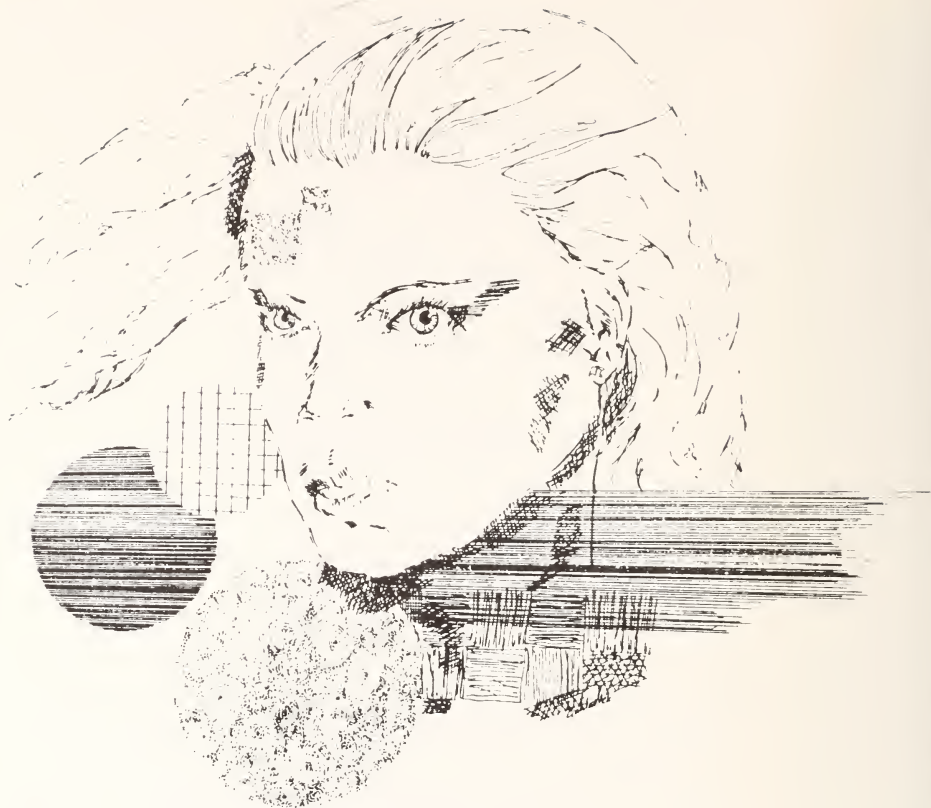
Eyes like
Liquid Brown
Immersion in
their Warmth

Alone again within the mind
As happiness hangs loosely
On yesterday's smile.
With closed eyes oblivion pursues
Maybe to be lifted by a memory
For another day.
May be forever when there's no one.

Fairies dance merrily for eyes of the forest
Spinning and smiling as wands gently
Touch nothingness
But soon departure arrived
As would a mirage.

Trees tower above olive grass
Big and beautiful they seem
Many leaves of lime and green
Tear-shaped
Their lives simply changed with the wind
As chaos behind the trees did rise
As darkness did fall.

Alone again within the mind
As state of being and destiny hang loosely
On will
With open eyes clarity emerges
As realization speaks of no control in
The other world
As happiness rests on today's light.



Ellen Dollar

Corn in Egypt

God it was hot. The air was thick, heavy, burdensome to walk through, even to breathe. It hung around me like a dead man, like a big, fat, dead man. A dead man who should not have been hanged. Southern dog-day blues. Even the snakes did not move. Nothing moved. Especially the air. I was sitting as still as it was, leaning on the pine board steps in front of my one-room, trying to read Walker Percy's Lancelot, but could not focus on the words because of the heat rising from its pages. I would have been asleep, but could not get there through the sweat and thoughts of cooler days and other times. So I just sat there staring into the piney woods around me, letting thoughts soak slowly into the sponge inside my mind. I was concentrating on nothing in particu-

lar when I heard a strange, seductive music...It seemed to come from every direction, yet from no direction. Soft and rhythmical, almost medieval, it danced through the air like a limber ballerina, tiptoeing gently on the shoulders of blank leaves. My mind tried to categorize it; my soul tried to absorb it; my senses tried to feel and taste it. They could not. Notes pure and solid yet vague poured into the afternoon. They dripped rhythmically from the trees, raindrop-like, one by one, many at the same time. Notes in keys I could not name, melody flowing in a way I could not understand. Yet it somehow was familiar as if I had heard it before, during a dream, or while I was drunk, or when I was too young to remember being aware of it. The more I tried to grasp the intensity of the sound, the more it eluded me. I finally closed my eyes and allowed my body to be moved by the powerful, penetrating rhythm. I do not know how long I sat there, eyes shut, elbows on knees, chin in hands, foot patting the bottom step like a baker's hand pats dough. Consistent, relaxed, mind detached, extremities acting without being consciously commanded; ears giving soul an opportunity to hear what the moon must feel when it is bright and full.

When I opened my eyes, I was somehow not surprised to see in front of me an older, happy, bearded man, resting on a crooked cane, his blue-green eyes sparkling like laughing stars. His trousers were well-worn yet had no tears or holes; tan corduroy old enough to be as comfortable as is ever possible for clothes to be. His collarless green T-shirt was untucked, wrinkled, and fell lightly around his small, square hips. Bare toes sneaked out from under leather sandal straps and looked as if they were accustomed to being attired that way. Strong shoulders gave birth to arms and hands that were not strangers to tools and patience; his hands expressing through their contentment, the experience and knowledge they possessed. When I noticed his satisfied hands, I knew I would like him. Some hands fidget and do not know casualty; they are restless and seem eager to be something different than they are. They are not gratified, confident, pleased hands.

They are not comfortable hands. They have not touched and really felt enough things, and because they do not know this, never will. No, his hands were experienced hands. They knew about the whole of life because they had touched, caressed, shaped and manipulated it. They had worked with and held pieces of it. They had known and could easily differentiate countless textures and surfaces. I wanted to hold them. Instead, I looked back into his smiling eyes and began to laugh uncontrollably; deep, gutful utterances of total joy and sincere hilarity. He instantly joined in, our combined voices resonating into and through each other and the forest. We laughed so hard that tears poured down our already sweat-moistened cheeks, salt finding salt, particles joining particles and finding their way down to T-shirts and occasionally to the ground where he collapsed on his knees to better support his body, trembling with the vibrations of his undulating laughter. After a few minutes of hearty expression, our heart-felt chuckles began to subside from exhaustion, until we were able to slowly sigh earnest sighs of relief. This was the first time I experienced laughter equal to good sex. We were perfectly into and enjoying the intensity of our unbridled laughter. We were perfectly into and enjoying the release of the subsiding roar. There is, I am learning, a time for every thing, as well as a thing for every time. I heard the music again, and realized it had never stopped. The harmonies joined us in the laughter, the melody was part of the reason for the laughter. The instrumental now continued, pleasing all things with its playful dance through the life-sustaining air.

I was still sitting where I had been, feeling curious and knowing, joyful and sad, full and empty, satisfied and unfulfilled. I felt like the days that come between seasons...not this way or that way; transitional and overwhelmingly full of the incredible way it is.

He was now sprawled gracefully on his side, his left hand supporting his greying head, elbow and armpit forming the other two points of an appealing triangle. His right hand held a fascicle of pinestraw which casually found its way to his

mouth. He chewed on the brown needles deliberately, reflectively, as if it was his favorite thing to do. He seemed to relish its very presence between his teeth and on his tongue. The edges of his lips were curled into a grin which made little wrinkles form around his passionate eyes.

At that moment I was in love with him. I had been forever, but until then did not know it. I was intrigued, fascinated and in disbelief that all of this was happening out of, and in the middle of, nowhere. A very large part of me was dying to know this man. Even more of me knew I already did. I somehow, through the overload of thoughts, found the words "Who are you?" and spoke them in a quizzical yet subtly demanding way. I watched him carefully as he slowly removed the pine needles from his mouth, smile still intact, and noticed that his skillful, beautiful hands moved in a concise, natural, easy way. His eyes seemed to emit tiny, happy sparks of shimmering light. I reconfirmed silently the fact that I really was in love.

"It would take too long to tell you who I am. We've had time before and we'll have it again, but this particular time, we don't have much time, so we must continue to use it in the very best way we can. I answer to the name Blue, and I'm here to see what you think about the music."

The music, the music, the strange, mysterious music. I had gotten so accustomed to it and so fascinated by him I had once again forgotten about it, even though I had simultaneously been fully aware of its presence, like unconsciously humming along to Muzak in the grocery store. I sat silently a moment, and tried to get his likewise mysterious words out of my mind, so that I could give the tune my full attention. Somehow without much effort, all thoughts of his words and presence left me. I heard clearly the vibrato of melodious sound, notes rising and falling, drifting in and out of me, and me, somehow in and out of them. A graceful, easy chorus still unidentifiable, yet spiritually moving and pleasing. I could not tell if it came from one instrument or several, and found myself lost in its penetrating

majesty. I looked at him and saw more than was there before. I spoke as honestly as I could.

"I like it...I feel it...It hits me hard, where it hurts to be hit...but...I can't seem to hear it all...like my ears and my insides still want more...I don't know...."

I let my words dangle there, and shook my head a little to help express the fact that I didn't really have the right words.

"You wrote it," he claimed, his smile never altering its distinctive charming form. "You wrote it a long time ago for me to perform, but left that life before you finished it. Isn't it all wonderful?"

"Oh God," I sighed deeply, and rubbed my forehead with the heel of my left hand as I do when something overwhelms me. I sat with my eyes closed and my hand to my head for a short time, and condensed the happenings of the past while into a single thought. I could not believe it made sense, but somehow it did.

"Why is it so easy for me to believe you?" I asked with a note of sentiment. My own smile was unerasable. I could not have removed it with a crow bar. "I mean, it's so absurd.... I actually believe you." I shook my head and sighed again, "Oh God...I just...."

"Yes, it is God," he interrupted. "But Ellen, we're running out of time. We're running out of your time. Try not to think about any of this except as music. Listen to the music. Absorb it. Become it. Remember it. I brought it here with me so that you might finish it in this life. Now is your time to create, to produce, to offer to other selves the part of you that is within each of them. Listen to what you've already composed. Listen for what is missing...."

Suddenly I was not aware of my body, or of him, or of the piney woods. I felt myself being slowly lifted into the hot air by a strength too strong to describe. I felt myself being propelled through the warm space that surrounded me, impelled into gliding motion. I was a vibration. An undulating, hovering, rhythmic oscillation. I was the music. Wave after wave of moving sound, I

flowed at an immeasurable velocity, all the while aware of my power, mobility, and melody. I streamed up and down, over and under, around and through the vast space around me. I was confident and bold and not shy to be so powerful, yet I was not in control, I felt my movements lengthen and slow, and tried to consciously pull myself back into my previous short, quick intensity, but could not. My motion retarded to a steady, slow throb, undulating still, yet at an almost inactive pace. I was now aware of another sound accompanying me ...an also slow steady throb pulsating simultaneously with me. I strained to hear--Ca Boomp, Ca Boomp, Ca Boomp--and then a voice from the distance, "Ellen," and a pressure somewhere, a heaviness, then SNAP, back into the reality of my body I could only hear the steady throb of my heart's beating...Ca Boomp, Ca Boomp...and then the voice again, "Ellen, Ellen...." My eyelids were as heavy as Kate Smith. I struggled unsuccessfully to lift them. Soft, full whiskers brushed my cheeks. Gentle lips touched my heavy eyelids, a finger traced the outline of my face. I felt the heaviness leave me and slowly opened my eyes to see this man above me, his own eyes still full of other worldly brightness. He spoke softly, musically, "I am sorry I had to pull you back, but you were so close to going too far.... How do you feel?"

I was groggy and sluggish, and slow to figure out that I was flat on my back several feet away from the step I had been sitting on.

"I'm OK, but I don't think I can move," I uttered in a sleepy-sounding voice. I made an effort to get up and found myself aided by his strong, gentle, miraculous hands. The mysterious melody continued its trek through the still air and through my soul, seemingly more familiar with each passing millisecond. He held me close to him and my senses fell back to me like a breaking wave falls back to the ocean. My arms encircled his waist and back, and we gave equal support to each other. It was an embrace of camaraderie, of love and silent magnitude. I felt at home, as if I had been born there. Only a short time passed before he spoke in a quiet, subdued voice.

"I have to leave. I have to go back to my place. Know we'll meet again, and when we do, we won't know what time is and won't be bound by it." He pulled me tightly to him, and I felt an energy pass between us which was electrifying and a deep understanding that did not need words. And the music, the damned incredible music still played and haunted me. I stepped back from our encompassing embrace so I could see him, and shook my head slightly from side to side. It was all too much; I was hot, tired and confused, and now angry that he was going to leave me with it all. But I realized that I knew the song. I recognized the patterns. I had memorized the melody.

"I have the music." I was sad now, resigned to the despondency that filled me, sad to have to watch him go, knowing I could never love anyone else in the way I loved him. Sad with the perception of the inevitable bittersweetness of life and its difficult lessons. Sad because the weight of the incredible "way it is" rested solely in my heart. I was sad to have to say goodbye to the perfection I had only briefly known. Sad that I had to live the rest of this life knowing what it could be. I was sad with the piercing beauty of inescapable truth. "But the instrument, I don't. What is it?"

He leaned forward and kissed my forehead with soft understanding. "Aah...the instrument, the very important instrument. Don't you remember receiving a simple message before that said only, "Listen?" I remind you again to do so. You know someone now who plays the instrument well. Seek him out. Listen to him and let him send you to the place where you can create. Let this man teach you how to create. Listen to him well, and you will know. And do not, above all things, forget how to laugh."

He reached for my hand and placed it against his cheek, nestled it there against his beard for a moment, and sent into me through his glance the warmth of a Jamaican sunset. He moved my hand to his lips and held it there long enough to thoughtfully kiss it goodbye. Laughter found its way from his mysterious depths into the sultry air.

Deep, hearty, and contagious, it permeated my spirit, and I found myself quivering between laughter and despair. I was so close to both I overflowed with emotion. Tears streamed down my smiling face and I lifted my shirt tail to wipe them away. When I looked up, he was gone...he had vanished somewhere between the jubilation and the sadness. I stood alone in the afternoon and leaned into it for support. I felt every possible feeling, each one contradicting another, so that I did not feel any one way but rather every way. I was laughing and crying simultaneously, feeling like the elements must have felt when they were in the midst of their creation. Unsure, transitional, full of their own metamorphosis and teeming with the saturation of the complexity involved in the moment.

I collapsed onto the thick pinestraw and sat screaming into the now silent forest, until most of my mixed feelings had been primevally released. I was exhausted, bemused, and inexorably contained by the instant. I gazed skyward and watched a great blue heron maneuver across the pallid sky. He circled above me once and offered a chortling cry before he moved on toward the lake. I had to smile, and stood to stretch my fatigued body. I was thinking about how good the lake water would feel against my skin when I noticed something appealing revealed partially by the dry pinestraw. I leaned down and discovered a well-used and intricately carved wooden cane...his cane; it was like finding a good friend in a foreign city. No, better than that. It was like finding water in the desert after being thirsty for a long time, or like being four years old and finding your mother after being lost from her in a large department store. It was like corn in Egypt. I rested it against my tear-stained face and relished in the coolness of the smooth wood. I breathed in its aroma and immediately relaxed. In that brief second, I was overcome with a rush of assurance that every little thing was going to be all right.

I inhaled all of the atmosphere I could hold, and sauntered with the aid of my wooden companion down the way to the water.

Jack B. Bedell

The Hanged Gods

Business Street's ablurr
During the work-day shuffle--
Briefcased suits,
Those pressed pinstripers,
Doing the fashioned shambles,
Knees worn from climbing
Too many latters,
Stepping too many shoulders
To bother with cleaning costs.
Perpetually sharp
In Italian design
(Machiavellian, I assume),
The only goal's to achieve,
To finish the day as begun,
Hanging conscience-free
On the wire
Without a crease misplaced
Or a thread of humanity.

Lunatic Ontology

To see years pass in seconds,
Pay no price to Time,
Even kings fall in droves
Before one I, having drunk
The fiery milk of paradise
And fed on honeydew.

How petty
Chasing answers to the world
When still and forever
I stand alone with the sky
Grinning in the moonlight,
Dancing beneath beams.

Like wind through my hair
I run in and out of life
Screaming history lessons
To deaf fools
And delight in their demise,
The promise of a new cast.

Chandel Hesselgrave
Only Seeing

The mottled carpet,
A bit of wall,
Brown bench in a corner.
Bending over a book,
I wait for my soulmate.
His thoughts linger here,
As do mine,
And they have occasionally mixed
In great swirling masses
Of vibrant colors
And tender, violent scenes.
Here we have touched,
And played, and wounded,
And grown strong together.
Here I wait for my lifelove.
(Or is he?)
He should be here any minute.
He should be here. . .

Gynger Ingram
Contestation

"Not this year, Putmire, not this year!" I hissed through clenched teeth. "I'm not the new freshman who takes the beatings anymore." With that, I turned and stamped away, determined to teach that little prof a lesson he'd remember for the rest of his career, if he had one by the time I finished with him.

My rivalry with the School of Theater began late last November when I auditioned for a role in the spring production of Ibsen's An Enemy of the People. I remember the afternoon well, a cold, rainy Putmire afternoon. I rushed into the main auditorium after psychology and found a seat up front. I folded my cane and put it in my bag. After retrieving my reading glasses from my purse, I sat down to watch the others.

Everyone read cold, having never seen the script before. As one student finished, he or she would hand the script to the next. When my turn came, I put my thick, domed reading glasses on and groped my way to the podium. I held the script close so I could read it easily. I read well. I knew that if I got a part, I could effortlessly memorize it during semester break.

I switched glasses, unfolded my cane, and tapped confidently out of the theater. Over forty people auditioned, including Dina Weston, another visually impaired student on campus. Dina and I had been friends once, but I left her in my dust because she had no future. She loved the theater more than God, and her purpose in life was to go to Hollywood and win an Oscar. With fanaticism like that for competition, I knew that I was best suited for a role in the play. I went back to the dorm without giving it a second thought.

The following afternoon, I returned to the theater to see which role I had received. With magnifying glass in hand, I scanned the list of names and parts. I found Dina's name, went on down the list, and then back up again. My name was not on it. Something was wrong. Surely Mr. Putmire had made a mistake.

I found him in his office typing. Mr. Putmire was a thin, forty-year-old man with no hair, save one tuft of sandy-colored straw above each ear. I had to knock twice on the open door before he finally acknowledged me. "Mr. Putmire, my name isn't on the cast list," I politely informed.

"I'm not using you, Rica," he said bluntly.

My face turned crimson. "And why not? You're using Dina," I inquired.

"The students I chose are better suited for the roles. And as for Dina, she read better. She read with more expression," he explained in monotone.

"How can you say that? How do you know that I didn't? Do you think I'm too blind for this activity? Is it because I hold the script too close to my face? I've got a photographic memory, sir. I could memorize the whole play if I had to," I said. I listened carefully to his reaction. I knew I had been discriminated against, and all I needed was a verbal blunder for proof.

Putmire fumbled for words. "I really can't discuss this right now. I have an exam to make," he finally blurted.

"Okay, thanks," I said. I left to plan my next move.

Dina's eyesight was not as bad as mine. She was merely visually impaired, not legally blind like me. Her eye disorder did not require her to hold printed matter close to her face. Therefore, Putmire could not use the excuse that he already had one blind student on the cast. I also knew that the Rehabilitation Code states that no handicapped person may be excluded from an activity on the basis of handicap. In my room, I had a book containing the Code. The following afternoon I took it to Mr. Putmire and showed him the section in question. He kept my book overnight to examine my point. I thought I had him; I thought I'd won. He caught me on my way to class the next morning, returned my book, and said there was nothing he could do because the selections had been made. I knew better, and made plans to see the department head.

With law book in hand, I introduced myself to the department head and explained my situation. He

in turn referred me to the Academic Dean, saying that he did not have the authority to handle legal disputes between students and professors.

To see the Dean required an appointment. It was Thursday afternoon. The soonest the secretary could get me in was Monday afternoon. I settled for that. My intention was to have an injunction put on the play until my case could be heard by the Faculty Congress.

Dina got wind of what I was planning to do and came to me in the dining hall at supper that night begging me not to do anything to hurt the theater and jeopardize her major. She pretended she didn't know what I was up to.

"Hi, Rica," she said giddily, sitting down opposite me. "Gee, it's too bad you didn't make the play."

Dina and I were still on speaking terms then. "Well," I said, "I know why I didn't make the play, but I'm going to get that fixed."

"What are you going to do?" Dina asked in a mockingly sheepish manner.

"Putmire refused me a part because I have to hold the script too close to my face, in short, because I'm blind," I began. "He wouldn't admit it, of course, but I can prove it. So, I'm going to the Dean Monday to have an injunction put on his precious play. Then I'm bringing discrimination charges." I sipped my coffee decisively. A rehearsed look of horror came across Dina's face.

"You can't do that, Rica!" she yelped. "That could mean a court battle! If that happens, the whole theater could be shut down next year and the embarrassment could last for years after the suit! Besides, the theater's no place for history majors. You have better things to do."

Dina had a point. I was up to my ears in a history competition at the time. I was to represent the University in a History Festival the week before the play. Dina and I were still civil, and three other friends of mine had parts in the play as well. I began to think of all the people I could hurt, as well as the University.

"Well, we shall see," I said. I picked up my tray and carried it to the conveyor belt.

By Monday, I had cooled off. I cancelled my appointment with the Dean. Semester break came and went, and so did the History Festival. The Festival was a riot. I would not have been able to make a single dress rehearsal for the play had I been chosen. Opening night, Dina and I walked to the theater together.

As I sat watching the play, watching an unknown sophomore in the role I wanted, I became angrier and angrier. How could I have allowed a blatant act of discrimination against the blind go unpunished? Why did I let myself be shut out like that? And how did I ever let that air-head Dina talk me out of seeing the Dean? I was angry at Dina, the school, the play, Mr. Putmire, and myself. What I had allowed was completely out of my character. I could do nothing about it, though. The play was in progress. However, I vowed that I would never allow something like that to happen again, even if it cost me every friend I had in the University.

My anger proved to be a prophecy. Almost one year to the day from that first audition, another one was held. This year the spring production was to be The Diary of Anne Frank, my favorite play. Again I auditioned, again Putmire pulled his stunt. That is where I began.

There was no pressure this time. I had dumped my friendship with Dina the previous month. I decided to get some help by contacting the Coalition of Americans with Impaired Vision. After describing both situations to them, they agreed to support me completely and finance any court costs. I then contacted my rehab counselor and obtained the State's support as well.

One Wednesday afternoon shortly thereafter, my rehab counselor, a representative from CAIV, and I sat outside the Dean's office waiting to see him.

"You again, Rica?" he asked teasingly as he came out to receive us. I had gone to Dean Forrester at the end of the last fall term to challenge a grade I had received in a science class. I got a B, but I deserved an A. I ended up before the Faculty Congress, which ruled in my favor. This was a first at the University. I in-

troduced Dean Forrester to my guests and we got to work on my second case.

I hand-delivered the injunction to Mr. Putmire. Dina was standing there with her boyfriend. The theater had already experienced gross budget revision. This was the excuse the University needed to drop the program.

Putmire stood and stared at me, open-mouthed. Blind as I am, I swear I saw his hands tremble. "There will be no play this semester. I'll see you in court!" I snapped.

"Can she really do this, Mr. Putmire?" Dina cried. He barely found the strength to nod.

Dina drew back her hand to strike me. I shrank back, but her boyfriend caught her by the wrist. "Easy, baby. You wanna go to jail?" he advised. All three of them stood fuming at me. I absorbed and savored every bit of it.

The first time I ever saw Mr. Putmire in a three-piece suit was the night we went before the Faculty Congress. Dr. Garver, President of the University, greeted me warmly. He had been favorable to me in our previous discussions of this and other matters.

The hearing took over two hours. I presented my case first. My rehab counselor, three CAIV representatives, and I described the two incidents of discrimination and our legal basis, the Rehabilitation Code, for bringing the case. "This is a blatant act of discrimination against the blind of America," said one CAIV representative, "and we shall not stand for it!" My group emitted verbal acknowledgements of agreement.

I spoke last. My concluding statement? "As a fee-paying student of this school, I am appalled at the actions of the School of Theater and its director. We do not need programs or people like that at our fine University!"

Putmire took his turn. "In my twenty years of service to this institution, I have never dealt with such a contemptible situation as this," he began. He tried what I figured he would. "This young lady has no cause of action in charging me with discrimination. I already have one visually impaired student of superior ability on the cast."

One of the CAIV representatives, an ophthalmologist, objected. When Putmire finished his ranting and it was our turn for rebuttal, the vision specialist defined the difference between visual impairment and legal blindness. He also explained the difference between Dina's condition and mine. After listening carefully to the doctor and examining posters and models of the eye he brought with him, the Congress ruled that Putmire could not use that escape route. Glee swept across my face.

The Faculty Congress then went into executive session to decide my case. When they finished, Dr. Garver invited us all back into the room. He looked curiously at me, shaking his head. He then delivered the decision. "We find in favor of Miss Rica Langston," he began. I could barely keep from bursting into laughter. Mr. Putmire leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair and buried his face in one hand. Dr. Garver continued, "Due to the delays caused by the injunction and this hearing, there shall be no spring theatrical production this year. The University encourages Miss Langston to continue with her private court case against Mr. Joseph Putmire for discrimination against the handicapped." I marched out of the room more triumphant than I had ever been.

Red-faced and teary-eyed, Dina caught me in the dorm lobby. "I hope you're happy!" she bawled. "You're so legalistic about everything! People aren't legal statistics, Rica!" She ran down the hall and cowered into her room. I didn't care. That girl was less than a student to me. In fact, she was a burden. Hopefully, I'd purge the school of her kind.

I had studied and read about court, but the day I brought my case against Mr. Putmire and the theater school was my first time to actually participate. An attorney of CAIV represented me. He explained my case almost the same way I did at the Faculty Congress hearing. The three other representatives and my rehab counselor were also there along with my father. Daddy had scolded me last year for letting Putmire beat me.

The defense tried the same approach, with Dina's testimony this time, but it was defeated

and overturned by the same ophthalmologist. Putmire knew he'd been had. Indeed, that is the way the judge ruled.

"In addition to finding defendant Joseph Putmire guilty of discrimination against the blind, I hereby order the School of Theater at the University closed for a minimum of two years. Mr. Putmire, will you please stand," the judge said. Putmire did as he was told, but I know it took all his strength. The judge continued, "I sentence you, Joseph Putmire, to perform eight hours of service per week to the handicapped of this community for a period not to exceed six months."

Of course, I thought Putmire got off too easy. Dina was distraught. The theater was no more, and she could not transfer to another school without a sizable scholarship, which she did not have the grades to get. Dina was literally grovelling after that trial, and she made sure I saw her. I had to say something to her, I just had to.

"You're a traitor," I seethed. She stared coldly at me. "You're a traitor to all visually impaired people. I can't believe you would defend what he did to me. Now, why don't you go get a job at Wal-Mart where you'll be of some use to society!" I was surprised. She sniffed, nodded, and walked away. She knew she was no match for me.

Dina applied for the scholarship anyway. Mr. Putmire learned the craft of wheelchair repair over at the rehabilitation center. I saw him in there one Saturday and sneeringly offered to teach him Braille. "I already have a teacher," he said softly. It was great! He was afraid of me. Of course Dr. Garver dismissed him from the University since there was no more theater to direct. He also added that losing a court case to a student was an embarrassment to the institution. But I wondered, why did he encourage me to go ahead with that case? I found out a few days later.

I sat in the cafeteria eating lunch when Dr. Garver came in and sat down at my table. "Hello, Rica," he said cheerfully.

"Dr. Garver," I said when I recognized him. I swallowed a mouthful of lasagna. "I've been mean-

ing to ask you, sir, why did you encourage me to go ahead with the case against Mr. Putmire?"

"Rica, the administration can't thank you enough," he said. I must have looked somewhat puzzled. He continued, "That theater program has been a financial burden to this institution for over five years. It spent twice as much money as it generated. No graduates have come from it in over two years. We desperately needed something like this to happen. The money saved will be re-directed toward residential life. The administration asked the judge to close the theater if you won the case, but Putmire doesn't know it." Dr. Garver went on to explain that Mr. Putmire had been causing other problems in the faculty for some time. I had done a great service to my school. "And Rica," he said as he got up to leave, "don't worry about tuition next semester."

"Why, Dr. Garver!" I exclaimed, almost choking on my food. I can plot and scheme circles around anyone, but I never expected that!"

Dina failed to get her scholarship, of course. "Congratulations on another failure," I mumbled as I passed her in the hall between classes. She heard me. How did I know she'd been rejected? I applied for the thing myself, knowing I was ineligible. But when I got the rejection letter, it listed the names of the winners.

The following Saturday night, Dina's boyfriend dumped her for the same reason I ended my friendship with her, her obsessive craving for a stage. Sunday morning, there was a commotion in the hallway that woke me up. I got up, put my robe on, and stepped out of my room into the hallway. "What's going on?" I asked sleepily.

Dina's next door neighbor shot me a menacing glance. "Don't worry about it. It's nothing that would concern you R-r-rica!" she retorted.

"Oh. Okay," I yawned. I slipped into my room and went back to bed. When I got up a couple of hours later and went down the hall to the bathroom, I found a yellow tape marked "Police Line" across the door and a notice telling all to go to the bathroom on the other wing. Dina had hanged herself in one of the shower stalls.

Some people said I was partly responsible. They even had me believing it for a while. I snapped out of that quickly, remembering how I felt the last time I bent to such peer pressure.

Soon thereafter, the suicide was punctuated by the boarding up of the theater building.

I went to the rehabilitation center that week to get a new magnifying glass. It was Tuesday, the day the local newspaper came out. The story of Dina's suicide appeared on the front page. My counselor had given me the paper to try my new glasses, but Mr. Putmire snatched it away when he saw the headline. The next day, he had a stroke. He's been in a nursing home ever since, a shame, I have to admit. Mr. Putmire had done a good job at the Center. He should have been working with the handicapped all along.

I put it all behind me. I had to. Dr. Garver helped. He told me one day, "Rica, sometimes you have to do what you have to do, regardless of the consequences." That man always stood by me. I went about my work, and two years later, I graduated Valedictorian of my class. The theater was still closed when I left. They never reopened it.

I attended one year of graduate school, and then went to work for the Smithsonian Institute. I stayed there until I had that no-good heart attack last year. The doctor blamed it on stress. I don't know. I still do some work for the Institute now and then, but I am mostly devoted to studying history and doing some writing.

The Contestation happened over twenty years ago, but it is still vivid in my mind. I caused a lot of problems and hurt a lot of people, but I stood up for the rights of the blind. I am now an executive member of CAIV as well. Looking back on the Contestation, I would do it over again if necessary. Nobody beats Rica Langston!

Afterword

Due to a second massive heart attack, Rica Langston died two weeks after she completed this account. I remember the Contestation, and Rica, too. I have traced her life since college, trying to find some semblance of goodness in her. She

looked so peaceful in her coffin. The volcano
sleeps. I'm still searching . . .

Joseph Putmire, Jr.

Tony Alvis

Beauteous creations do play the part
We behold in them
And they in we
The sessions of time and space
The miracle of beginnings
Toddlers at play
The buds before flower's breath
Savannahs of the patriarch's land
All culminate to a growing stillness
And in eventuality
All ascends
To nonexistence

Twister

He is a giant who hailed from Springhill,
Reared by a father who labored at the ol' paper mill.
A man idolized by his mother and sister,
His friends call him The Twister.
Others know to call him Mister.
A young man, mounted the wings of eagles and off he flew,
Pieced together the puzzle of wisdom as he grew.
Reached peaks no man had ever scaled,
While through the wind and cloud he sailed
As his hair turned from red to white,
Found truths and held them firmly as right.
From printed words he will not preach.
Hard earned lessons of life he will teach.
A man we know will never die.
His experience, no generation can deny.
And when his breath is gone and his last drink is drought,
He will have true life everlasting, in the students that
he taught. . .

He's pregnant.
Ten months.
His mouth is
without teeth.
The hair,
No longer there,
except on the sides.

"Bud" shakes hands with him:
They're Best Friends,
Worst Enemies.

Bud gave him
a light head
temporary company
and a lapse of memory
about Her

Bud took
youth
reasoning
and the love of
the children

Tabatha Thompson
Paint Yourself Red

Me up at does

out of the floor
quietly stare

a poisoned mouse

still who alive

is asking What
have i done that

You wouldn't have

e.e. cummings

They're Diseased

"Annie! Why didn't you wake me up? I've got five minutes, and...God, I don't wanna think about what that man'll do to me if I'm late again! Did you hear me? Annie!"

"What?...Well, after I saw the way you looked when you came in last night, I didn't think you'd go to work this morning. What does that greasy guy do to you anyway? You always come home looking like...Jack!"

"Yeah, Jack! Oh, hell, maybe he won't be too pissed," she said to herself. "Hey, did you make coffee?"

Annie walked into Lily's bedroom. "Yes, and don't worry about Jack. You know he won't care. Besides, **he's** always late, too."

"I know, but you know I always have to get upset about **something** when I've gotta goddamn hangover. It helps the pain."

Lily walked into the kitchen. She concentrated on the coldness of the wood floors on her bare feet, and she thought of how she always forgot to put socks on. She probably never would remember.

She was always still asleep, and she kinda liked the feeling it gave her.

"Annie, I caught a rat!"

Annie ran into the kitchen. Lily stood peering through the glass door of the cupboard. As she gazed over Lily's shoulder, Annie saw the chest moving amongst the coffe mugs.

"Lily, he's still alive."

Annie opened the door as carefully as she opened a window to look at the birds on the sill, and she ever so gently picked up the mouse.

"Annie, they're diseased. You'll. . ."

"Lily, your're diseased. It can't hurt you. See, it's barely breathing."

The mouse, silver as your grandmother's tea set, lay in Annie's hand, india ink eyes wouldn't show themselves again.

"I had a friend in college who took this rat lab. They did experiments on mice. When they didn't have anything else to do with them, they put them in a meat grinder. . . oh, Lily, what's the point. . . I'm gonna bury it."

"Annie, why do I feel like hell for putting out the poison? It's like apart of you dies when someone steps on a roach. I'll bring some home from Tiffany's so you can bury them too."

Annie laughed in a miserable sort of way, and they held each other for a moment; understanding passed through joined limbs.

who are you, little i

*(five or six years old)
peering from some high*

window; at the gold

of november sunset

*(and feeling: that if day
has to become night*

this is a beautiful way

e.e. cummings

Free Sessions

"Maybe if I had known," Annie said, "it wouldn't have been so bad . . . No, I mean, if it had been me who wanted it. Me who said it. Maybe I would be okay."

"You said it, not me."

"What do you mean, Jeff?"

"You said if you'd been the one to walk away, you'd be alright. So, you don't think you'd hurt like I know you're hurting now?"

Jeff was Annie's employer, psychiatrist (she was his secretary, he gave her free sessions), and apart from Lily, was her best friend.

"God, Jeff, there I was, trying to gain some self-esteem for myself, and Simon just walks away with some chick named Linda. I think it might have been easier if he had slept with Lily. That was a joke. You were supposed to laugh."

"Annie, you take everyone else's problems so seriously, but when it comes to your own . . . damn it . . . would you listen . . ."

She walked over to the bookcase, and stood pretending to examine the collection--in reality, making a poor attempt to ignore Jeff.

"What's this? Simon and Garfunkel trivia?"

How did that song go? 'Wish I was a Kellogg's cornflake--floatin' in my bowl takin' movies.'"

"You're such a pain in the ass sometimes, Annie. Why do I pay you, much less give you free sessions? God, whadda you tell my patients while they're waiting?"

"You pay me so I can afford to buy **your** lunch,

you give me free sessions cause you don't pay me enough so I can go to some other quack, and as for your patients, I only speak to Mrs. Rollins. . ."

"The bird lady?"

"Yes. No one else talks to her, and she gives me the best dill pickles. It's sad that she makes such good pickles, and nobody knows because they don't talk to her."

"Get out there and do some work. Your hour's up anyway."

"Aren't you gonna thank me for the corned beef? Oh, and don't worry about the trivia book."

I wanted to marry Art Garfunkel once, at least have some sort of sexual relationship with him. I probably still would."

Annie walked back to her desk and thought of Simon (the bastard), dead mice, and killing herself, which she didn't dwell on very long cause she was hungry.

annie died the other day

*never was there such a lay--
whom, among her dollies, dad
first ("don't tell your mother ") had:
making annie slightly mad
but very wonderful in bed
--saints and satyrs, go your way*

youths and maidens:let us pray

e.e. cummings

***I was looking out of my window the other
day***

"No. No, Simon."

"Let me in, Annie."

She knew she would let him in, but extending their conversation through the door somehow made Annie feel strong; strong enough to endure Simon's plead session anyway.

"Okay, Simon."

They sat on the floor.

"Where's the sofa?"

"I'm having it recovered . . . in white."

"You always did want a white couch. What happened? Your boss start paying you more?"

"No . . . I . . . I met the prettiest pair of blue eyes . . . blue-green . . . just like dental floss they were--mint-flavored dental floss. Spindles of blue-green thread, waxy and smooth. . .

they cut clean through like floss slices your gums if you're not careful. His name is Andy."

"Yeah? Well . . . what about me? I love you. Yeah, I still do. Linda was no good for me. She

couldn't even cook; not like you and your homemade pasta. Whoever he is, forget him. I'm here now. I'm here for you."

"I was looking out of my window the other day. I saw the river a couple of blocks over. I thought it was trying to reach me from the pay phone . . . and then I knew that it was me . . . I should be outside, outside, outside . . . and for that moment I wasn't frightened . . . of myself or anyone. No one could have touched me in that minute. It was beautiful." (She had been staring at the wall, but now she faced him with eyes the color of old pennies.) "I felt beautiful, and . . . I've never felt like that before."

"What . . . what?"

"Don't you see, Simon? No. Of course you don't. That's just it, you don't . . . and what's worse for you is that you never will. I don't need you anymore, Simon. You've served your purpose, and you did quite well."

"Damn you . . ."

"All this time, I thought that being so sad was the way I was supposed to feel. Later, I figured out that it was wrong, but I didn't want to give it up cause I didn't think I could live alone and happy . . . that's why you did so well. Even when you left, you never stayed away long enough for me to experience life by myself, except this time. Your part of me, I mean that part that you knew . . . is dead. I buried it with that poor damn mouse in central park."

Remembering Michael

The air is crisp, the leaves turn gold,
A whistle blows, the crowd roars,
The football is in the air.
In my throat is a lump.
I remember shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile,
Tawny hair blowing in the wind.
And now they aren't here.

All is aglitter with decorations so gay.
It's Christmas; gathered around the tree
We're filled with good cheer.
Tears glisten in my eyes.
I remember shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile,
Tawny hair blowing in the wind.
And now they aren't here.

Clovers burst into bloom, Spring is finally here.
The Little League baseball teams are in full swing,
The ball is tossed, the bat is swung.
Sadness consumes me.
I remember shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile,
Tawny hair blowing in the wind.
And now they aren't here.

The sun shines brighter, Summer is nearer,
Everything is almost the same, everything is different.
Grief presses upon my heart,
It's been almost a year.
I remember shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile,
Tawny hair blowing in the wind.
And now they aren't here.

Shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile,
A dimpled smile? It is here!
Tawny hair blowing in the wind.

They are still here, in memory.
My heart fills with joy
And memories play within my mind,
Memories of shining brown eyes, a dimpled smile, tawny hair.

Mary Boone

Speed

Seven O'Clock
Need that Speed
nervous stomach
shaky legs
slow down
 yellow lines
passing
 white lines
out of danger
Speed
 pressing on
blinking lights
slow down, stop
Everything's fine
Speed
Was that a flying cow
No, just a car tumbling over
 No one's hurt
Speed
 destroys lives
Tomorrow, I'm driving 55

Leslie Gregory

Dans Un Confessional Noir

"The obscure moon lighting an obscure world
Of things that would never quite be expressed. . ."

-Wallace Stevens

"The Motive For Metaphor"

Summer's end
your cut flowers
now late autumn
enumerates their deadness
 pinks brown
 oranges black
 blooms curl, pucker
 womanish stems shrink--
 faded grey breasts

Wallace's orb swells obscure
harvest lights
flannel-wrapped questions
left untouched
 unpicked cotton after rain
lastly you spoke
discontent, dissatisfaction
my name

In moon's wash
white leaves
settle in your beard
I close my eyes
but have already seen



Jack B. Bedell

Search for a Grail of Sort

Eloquence has always been a strange idea to me. The mere thought of it is like catching a fistful of water--it just slips away. Everywhere I turn, someone's telling me that it's what I need to survive in the real world; and with it not any sort of fitness but the eloquent facade of such. For lack of insight into this theory of grace under pressure, I'm an idiot caged in a more literate world.

You see, I'm what you might call a sort of failed character. I'm the semi-decent looking guy, not unexciting at all, that you hear screaming, "Why is it that we always lose the last cab to the impeccably attired Wall Street-type just when the rain starts? Why is it that we lose our women to the silky Don Juans with their sugary tenor voices?!?" It's these and other mysteries that cause me to forget rather than to investigate life.

A bit harsh in examining my own state, you might say, but college impressed this attitude

upon me. It's that hell-hole that's made me a card-carrying member of Pessimists of America. To be sure, They've compacted Their universe into a ball and rolled it towards my questions. HA!! and that's an understatement. But all this talk about college brings me back to this eloquence thing. It's what ground the gears to a halt.

My family, you see, sent me away to school so that at least one specimen of our dying breed might, upon examination, be considered articulate and accomplished in at least one area of life.

Today, I'm to be forcibly removed from the university. Oh, don't be alarmed. It's time for graduation. This afternoon will be another empty transitional stage in my life. It, along with junior and senior high, is the third cap and gown, the third tassel to be swapped from right to left; and still I have no sense of this eloquence thing that was to be the ultimate goal of all of this madness.

My advisors say, "You must learn from your experiences, son." I've heard it so many times that I actually say it to myself occasionally just to keep my mind in check. I've even tried to apply this injunction to this problem of discovering eloquence that I might bring it back to my parents with a sense of accomplishment.

My problem is, however, that every time I think I've grasped this poltergeist by the seat of its proverbial pants, I discover my folly, and much, much too late to be of any benefit, I must add.

I once thought a certain Mr. Joe College campus person had this eloquence thing wrapped up in a small package. I followed him endlessly--it was easy; he lived in my dorm. Overtly, he had everything: nice car, women, grades. In Plato's strict sense, there was nothing spectacular about him that I could discern, but he did have one item that no one else I'd encountered in my personal sphere possessed. A gold pocket watch. Man, I tell you, I thought that was the key. Everywhere I tracked him, he had that watch. With a deft flick of the wrist, he could extract it from his hip pocket and bring it before his seemingly omniscient glare. To me, that watch was a looking

glass into the future. No, more than that, it was a dictionary of protocol and etiquette that gave meaning to everything. It was his wizard's test book.

One day, pressed by a job interview, I found myself unable to follow Mr. Merlin. Dressed fit-to-kill and prepared to present myself, I thought I had the system beat if I could only land this job. I'd have the end result of my goals without accomplishing the goals themselves--mainly conquering this eloquence thing. I can remember strolling into that office with as much optimism as I had experienced since first stepping foot on the campus, only to see a delicately pressed pinstripe suit holding up to the world the symbol of eminent manhood shining reflections from polished gold and glass. The very sight of this magician eyeing the source of his sorcery served to provide a catharsis for any sense of hope I might have had. What had I done to deserve that fate? The very thought of that silky sonofabitch sitting down with Vice President Becknowr of Spartan Cable Ads (and stealing away my only hope of returning home a man) swept every sense of admiration for this seemingly eloquent man leaving only indignation to fill the emotional void.

For some reason, my survival instincts overpowered my pessimism on that day. Remembering now the smile on that bastard's face as he left Mr. Becknowr garnished with that watch and gleaming in confidence was enough to drive me to murder. He still had everything--the eloquence, the elegance, and, of course, that damned watch.

You know, my interview actually went well for three-fourths of its time. I dazzled Mr. Becknowr with more articulation than I thought myself capable, talking slogan creation, marketing skills, and even my bets on the NBA championship. God, I thought the rapport had sealed it away until the old fart asked, "What TIME is it?"

The next thing I knew, I was standing in the lobby of the building, out of breath from the retreat. It mustn't have been fifteen minutes when I saw Mr. J. C. C. (with the blonde-haired secretary from Becknowr's office, no less!!!) pass explaining how he had earned the job with his tact

and skill. What nerve, the bastard! He hadn't done a damn thing. It was the watch, I thought. Suddenly, as if beckoned, the damned thing fell out of his pocket onto the plush carpet of the lobby.

I hurried to it so I might touch this talisman that had so utterly destroyed me in life (at least, for the sake of melodrama, at that very moment) before its owner returned for it like Samson for his shorn locks. He did not turn back, though, and a million thoughts flooded my mind. Could I repossess this thing? Or did it work like a four-leaf clover--only the original finder could benefit?

Picking it up, my perceptions were shattered. The damned thing wasn't even running (its date was set five months before I'd even formulated the notion of its powers). My God, it had never worked at all!! I had been beaten out of, psyched out of, a business opportunity by a worthless piece of metal that might well have been used for a doorstop. So much for having a handle on eloquence.....

Needless to say, I've become accustomed to my pessimism now that all the disillusionment of college is behind me. I've scooped up Their ball and saved it for later reference; but one thing, this eloquence matter remains. Maybe it's a rhetorical question, or maybe it's a self-contradictory concept. Regardless, allow me to end with a quote:

"There are far too many hands on My time as it is without two mechanistic ones in my pocket binding me to temporal existence."

Leslie Gregory
communion

Silent moments
you appear,
singular
approaching thoughts
I call you mine
You have made me holy, wholely
-holely
sanctity of swiss cheese
nubby pine board
stigmata
words
breaths
pauses
pouring crimson streams
bleeding
bloody
piss pot poetics
 I cradle your head
 sweaty stillness
 sacred oneness
 blessed atonement

Edward T. H.

Cast No Stones: or A Confession Heard

Bit by Lot's salt,
My heart pumps sting
Of moments played
For memory's spite
Too near to put away.

Taste thine own Blood
Children of God.

Cast no stones
On this fool.

The torment felt
Within the Bones
Reminds of loss
Given Up in Mass--
Sacrificing could be
On the altar of is.

Cast no stones
Children of God--
The sting is enough.

But in a circle of Hell,
Penned by my own compass,
The Lamb has no direction
For this seed upon the Stones--
No judgement, only thought.

Hearken unto thyself
Children of God

Jack B. Bedell

Silence--The Piper

From many minds
Comes one voice
Not heard
By those who form it--
A state of Life
This silence, to lead us
Away from our self.

The piper's ample price
Is paid
With our born unity.
We follow his lead
In separate consciousness
Held together by Pity
Of our shattered whole.

To end the piper's trek
Making a simple sound
Piercing the bonds of Silence
Seems aridly simple
But the state remains--
Lost in the forest,
We are still together.

Beta Omicron Omicron Mu: or BOOM!!!

My story is very unusual. I started out a normal (if slightly perverse) college student. Now, I'm not quite so sure what I am. It all started after a wild frat party. I finally laid my new girlfriend. It was about time. I'd been going with her for two weeks. After a night of booze, drugs, and wild sex--which included an orgy with three other couples--we all decided to go for a pizza. It was after we left the pizzeria that we heard the news.

The summit talks broke down. The newscaster sounded scared. His voice cracked and trembled through the Fiero's powerful sound system. I got on my C.B. and called my three friends in their cars behind us. I told them to follow me, I had a plan. At the time, I didn't quite know what it was, but they followed me. I guess they remembered my reputation for knowing where the best parties were. But then again, it could have been the fact that we were messed up on various illegal substances.

Our first stop was the dining hall. My friends didn't think it was a good idea to steal the food, but I reminded them that within an hour all the Pigs were going to be burned to a crisp anyway. We loaded as much canned food as we could into the four cars we had. Someone mentioned the fact that the food sucked. I said they had two choices: eating it or starving to death.

When we got to the bomb shelter on campus, the line we expected to see wasn't there. As a matter of fact, the door to the shelter was locked. It was after we got the door open and moved all of our stuff in that we heard it, a low-pitched whine. We decided then that we had no time to wait for other people. We had to get in and bolt the door.

The explosion was deafening. The heat in the shelter rose to 122 degrees. I started thinking that I was dreaming. I hadn't thought it was really going to happen. I just wanted to party in

the bomb shelter. Stealing the food from the dining hall was just part of the game. And now the whole world was being burned to ashes.

The six months we spent in the shelter were living hell. We did have plenty to eat. We found out after the bombs went off that the shelter was completely filled with food, enough for sixty people to survive on for months. What made it so bad was boredom. There's only so much eight people can do to keep their minds off the situation.

For three months, people kept banging on the door. All of us agreed that if we opened the door we would flood the shelter with radiation. I felt bad. But, hell, we would have died, too, and we were the only hope for mankind's survival.

All four of the girls wound up pregnant. I decided we should give the children classy fraternity names. We also figured we'd change our own. "If we're to be the beginning of a new world, we should have classy names," I told everybody.

I opened the door and shouted into the sunlight. "Today is the beginning of a new order! Let us now go out into this raw world and conquer it!"

* * *

"Well, that is the story, my child," the old man said as he closed the tattered book. "That is why we celebrate the day when the gods Zoos, Apollow, Hermies, and Hurkyewlies left the shelter and rebuilt the world."

"Wow, that's a neat story. Are they coming back?" the child asked excitedly.

"Yes, my child, they are. One day in the future, they will come. With the goddesses Uhthena, Veenis, Eros, and Artima, they will come to Earth in flaming Fieros." He put the book back on the shelf.

"Are they going to live with us?" the child asked.

"No, child, they will live in the shelter they crawled from that fateful day five hundred years ago." The old man strained to his feet to leave. As he was walking toward the door, a young woman walked up to him.

"Daddy, you shouldn't be filling that boy's head with such nonsense. You know they aren't com-

ing back," she said scornfully. "It's like burning those pigs every year, it's a waste of time. They aren't coming back."

"Yes they are," the old man said angrily. "One day they will come, and so will the bombs. You'll see." He pointed at her. "And when you are not invited to go to the shelters with them, you'll be sorry you doubted the word of the Diary."

She looked at him sadly. "Don't you know that book is full of fairy tales." She turned to the child. "Seezer, go take your bath and get ready for bed. Mommy's going to the orgy tonight." She turned back to the old man. "Oh, after the festivities, the new ruler is going to show us a new weapon. He invented it to keep our world safe from whatever may threaten us. The weapons are called explosives."

The old man sighed and quietly left the room.

Chandel Hesselgrave

Not About Shaving

I barely think of the razor
As it glides smoothly over my calf,
Making a path through the snowy white cream.
And yet, if I held it just the wrong way,
The razor would cut my skin,
Leaving a tiny nick
A tiny, aching, itching nick
That would burn for days
And leave a tiny scar.
I remember that nagging pain;
I have such scars, there--
On my calf.
And yet,
Again I hold the razor,
And again,
And yet again,
In the hope that one day,
The razor might be kind.

Jack B. Bedell

The Prophet

Before the eyes of a crowd,
What answer can be
Is not His
But of a mouthpiece,
A simple shepherd
Of the word, forced
And pulled by Time.

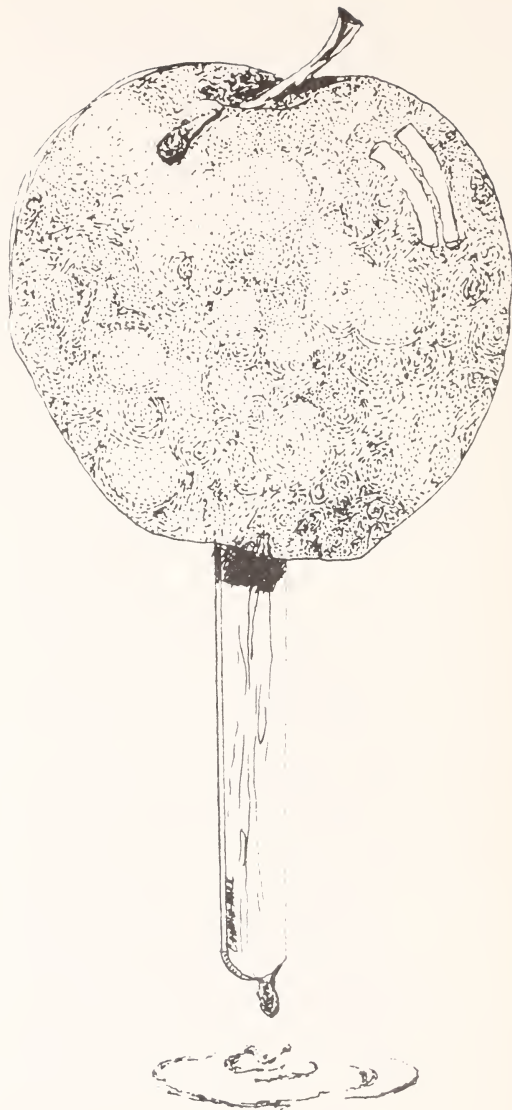
Messages flowing from the well
Of endless depth and kind
Soothe the masses
Torment his heart
To feel the stage
And hear the audience
Too loudly for the truth to be.

The Voice was there
Once.
He let it go
In despairing for hearts
He alters with His word.
Faith that he creates becomes
General which becomes
The way.

Transcendence

mystic moments
 passed alone
in places
 penetrating. . .
deep within
 ancient yearnings
for inclusion,
 place,
as part of
 the
circle within
 circles
that encompass
 all circles
a necessary
 piece in
the endless
 cycle. . . turning
spinning,
 curving,
 flowing,
rhythmic motion
moving in and
 out of
me. . .

 I in and
out of it. . .
I come and
 go my
way. . .



Pat Divietro

Where is Eve Now?

They say it's like comparing apples and oranges or fitting square pegs in round holes. A paradoxical statement, if studied, could send one to seek counseling from paid professionals who spend all day listening to demented people's

meandering. Well, a square peg, in all its grand splendor, will never (short of pile-driver or thermo-nuclear device) fit into a round hole. By that same token, oranges, even though they keep the garbage disposal smelling fresh and have a full day's supply of vitamin C (not vitamin E, the sEx vitamin), have no bearing on this paper. Apples, on the other hand, have a full range of symbolic value from computers to state trees to the now controversial subject of sex. For it is told that soon after Adam was created he was tempted into poor standing with one bite of a Yellow Delicious. Ironically enough, Adam, who was trying to show that he wore the fig-leaf of the garden, was forced by a woman to feast on the entree in question, a woman driven by her own endless passion in a quest to fulfill the deep burning which propelled her to commit the sin that scars all the human race. Today, however, men must submit themselves, body and soul, to the strict, hardened tortures of pleading, lying, and cheating just to acquire what little sexual release they can (which in most cases consists of a firm handshake and a pat on the back). So, in all wonderment and disappointment, where's Eve now?

To fully understand how the sexual attitudes have digressed to this bottomless abyss of undue morality, one must study events of the past. By far the most apparent degeneration of open promiscuity was the downfall of Rome (the pleasure center of the pre-Christian world) somewhere around 200 A.D. This was due mainly to the workings of Nero, a known eunuch, which left many a senator and soldier alike to suffer in the clutches of so-called morality and the common decency of the time. It remained stagnant and unchanged until the end of the medieval period when women, feeling their souls burn with the fire of unbridled passion, used their sexual charms to sucker and swoon knights, kings, blacksmiths, friars, and dragons to act on their every whim. Soon, dragons and knights became scarce and there became only one king, smothering that inferno of lust in women, sending sex back to its original stagnated form. For centuries after this, men suffered the

injustices of sexual frustration and self-manipulation waiting for the dawn of a new day.

Eventually, that day came with the greatest single advance in wholesale sex across the world: the advent of the sexual revolution (caused by two inventions, mechanical and chemical, the electric washing machine and the pill), which occurred during the late 1960's. This meant that people from every walk of life and all social classes spent all their energy on constant "hide the salami." Women returned to the habit of burning their bras and singing out against sexual repression and demanding equal rights while people "bopped their brains out" left and right. Then, as quickly as it grew, it climaxed and dwindled, leaving the battletorn victims scratching for whatever minute morsel of excitement their fleeting souls could find.

In closing, the remnants of the great revolution, who still keep the faith by supporting singles bars and wild one-night stands of "wanton whoopi," are having to fight (against incredible odds) the Moral Majority, censoring, and a rash of incurable social diseases. But, if Eve is what one seeks, one must look deep inside every woman and use every aspect of one's sexuality to rekindle the raging flame that controls her sexual willingness and blatant availability. Either that, or get her drunk.

We're Here

Package of doubts
 cannot evade gravity.
The attraction is
 strong and steady.
Holder's footprints depress,
 emotions compress.

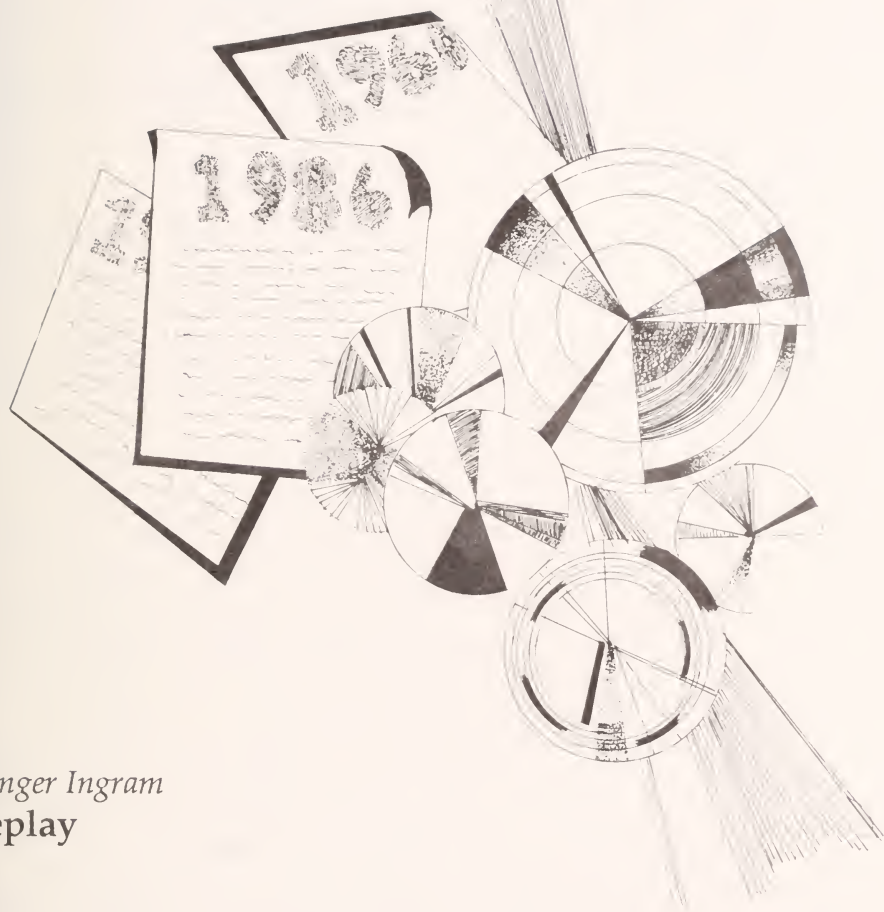
Doubts fatten with time--
 the classic binge.
Fighting is catalytic,
 the "quick" thickens.
Sinking continues
 to a nonexistent bottom.

Confusion. Ambiguity.
 Survival craves solutions.
Friends--
 lenses of perspective.
The unwrapping. . .
 a package of Nothing.

Ellen Dollar

Arkansas November

hours pass within hours
time seems to stand still
as we stare out open window
resting on sills
gazing into winter's naked depths
silent crystal seconds pass
slowly through still grey forests
we share moment by moment
the immensity of the
time that comes and goes
between us . . .
somehow we understand the
universe briefly
and each other fully,
if only to be remembered
circles link arms with circles
thoughts fall slowly,
in no rush to settle down.



Gynger Ingram
Replay

Marcus felt like he wanted to puke. As he stepped into the thick night air, he disgustedly kicked the door to his green 1969 Ford pickup closed. It recoiled by flying back open, as if in utter defiance. The truck had only one working headlight and the right side of the rear bumper dangled by a rusty coat hanger. Marcus sauntered away from it across the parking lot. He reached into his jeans pocket and took out two pink pills, which he poked into his mouth and washed them down

with the last two swallows of his beer. He thought it would get him through his night's work, turning records from midnight until six A.M. while most of Dallas slept. At least that was a semblance of gainful employment, the lack of which Marcus knew well.

"It's about time you showed up! You're late again, boy," said Paul, the disk jockey whose show preceded Marcus'.

"Off my ass, man. I'm not in the mood for it," he warned. He turned around and proceeded to pull his albums for the night.

"Sure, okay," Paul said. "Anyway, you look like shit."

"I ought to. Nothin' but shit ever happens to guys like me. Nothin's changed around this place in twenty years," complained Marcus.

"The boss says it won't either, not with all the big name stations walking all over us. I'll see you later, man. I'm late for a party," Paul said as he left.

"Lucky jerk," Marcus mumbled under his breath as he sat down in his chair. He unbuttoned his dirty flannel shirt and pushed his long, black, greasy hair out of his face. Reaching under the control panel, he groped around in a brown grocery bag for another beer. He switched on the other turntable and leaned back in the chair. He could feel his high starting.

The song he played was an oldie, "Time in a Bottle," from 1972. Suddenly, the room went hazy and Marcus felt like he was passing out. In a few seconds, the feeling had passed. He played another oldie, "Summer Breeze," from the same year while he looked for the news announcement. It was almost one o'clock. The news consisted only of sale announcements and the weather. The news bulletins were supposed to be run on the computer, but this one was typed.

"It must have broken down again, as usual," Marcus thought as he started the cassette machine to play some current top chart music, "Holding Back the Years," by Simply Red. For a few seconds, he again went blank and slumped over the control panel. When he raised his head, he saw a standard, computer-printed news announcement with current

information on it. "DAMN!" he said aloud. He thought he must have picked up an old one by mistake. He put the beer to his lips and sucked some down. He played the new Falco album after that, which lasted most of the hour.

Shortly before two o'clock, he put on another oldie from December of 1979, "Cars," by Gary Numan. Marcus began searching through the trash on the counter for his next news release. He was getting sleepy, so he did not pay attention to what he was reading. The last item on the list read, "The hostage crisis in Iran is now one month old as angry captors keep making demands and families of the hostages plan appeals for their release." Marcus threw the paper back on the desk and reached for the turntable knob. Then he realized what he had read. He punched in a commercial with his right hand and snatched back the news item with his left. He read it again, only to realize he had read it correctly the first time. He scrambled for the daily newspaper and stared in disbelief when he found a 1979 date and a picture of the Iatollah on the front page. Marcus fell back in his chair shaking his head. "Somebody around here is trying to pull some shit on me," he thought. He put away the '70's stuff and played current for two hours. He took another pill and drank another beer. He was a mess by four o'clock.

After he read the news and weather, Marcus got brave. He suspected the dope and beer to be responsible for what happened earlier. He was really feeling good, so he found a 1969 Aretha Franklin album, put it on the turntable, and went to take a leak. He fell against the wall, and almost lost it for a few seconds. Marcus glanced out the bathroom window and couldn't find his truck. There was a brand new truck in his parking place, but he knew that couldn't be his. He thought about calling the police.

Thinking everything was OK and he was only drunk, when he got back to the control room he took out the oldest Beatles album he could find and put it on the turntable. He turned it on, then passed out completely.

The album played halfway through before Marcus slowly began to revive. He jumped to his feet in

shock, his glance darting around the room. All of the new albums were missing. The modern control panel had turned into an artifact like the kind he had not seen since grade school. Screw-in light bulbs replaced the usual fluorescent lighting. He looked out the window and saw no truck at all. "What the hell!" he shouted as if someone would hear. His eyes went to the counter.

Marcus grabbed the Dallas Daily News with both hands. The date on it was November 21, 1963. The headline read, "Kennedy To Appear In Dallas Tomorrow."

Melanie Dockens
The Diary of Anne Boleyn

1527--I received another love letter from Henry. I refuse to be his mistress.
Henry began divorce proceedings.
January 1533--I think I am pregnant.
May 1533--Henry got his divorce and we were married.
September 1533--It is a girl . . .
May 1536--I was tried and convicted of adultery.

A Potentially New Art Form:
Answering Machine Messages

an early attempt
by
Dr. Norman German

I know you wanted a warm human being to talk to, but you've reached one of those bizarre answering machines. I promise my master will return your call immediately if at the sound of the tone you will leave your name, phone number, time of call, wind direction and velocity, relative humidity, the second line of Paradise Lost, where Amelia Earhart's body can be found, the cause of Al Capone's death, and the name that Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim is better know by.

Contributor's Notes

Tony Alvis, a junior majoring in Music Ed., likes viewing beautiful places, playing music, and watching ducks on Chaplain's lake.

Jack B. Bedell, a graduate student in English who would like to have an out of body experience with the spirit of S. T. Coleridge just long enough to steal a little creativity and talent.

Mary Boone is a business management major.

Maria Burke is a junior English Ed. major with a minor in Spanish.

Greg Burkhead is a sophomore who is undecided on a major, considers himself a 5'10" single, good-looking snappy dresser.

Adriana Daudt de Faro is a senior majoring in German with a minor in business administration who loves to travel and meet new people and their cultures.

Pat Divietro is a junior music ed. major from Bossier city who wishes to become a freelance gynecologist.

Mary Allen Doherty is a graduate student in English. She teaches English in Winnfield, La, is married, and is the mother of two young adults.

Ellen Dollar is a senior in general studies who still enjoys nude beaches in Greece.

Dan Forrest is a history major who enjoys reading, doing crossword puzzles, collecting useless bits of trivia, and "writing about what [he knows]."

Leslie Ann Gregory is a senior English major with a minor in speech/theatre who is currently working on developing a poetic style using the count of bones in William Carlos Williams' body.

Edward T. H. is an unclassified, nonstandard student who is currently working towards political upheaval and nirvana.

Chandel Hesselgrave is a freshman English education major who is an avid fan of the vaporous sensibilities of Richard Bach and the cosmic absurdities of Tom Robbins. She would be perfectly at home at Northwestern if only she could keep a cat in her dorm room.

Gynger Igram is a sophomore English major who enjoys writing, calligraphy, and beadwork.

William R. Murphy is a freshman art major who maintains a passion for all areas of the arts.

J. Petchachelli is a junior searching for his particular niche in life and a career in aquaculture.

Annika Sjoberg is a an exchange student from Helsingborg in South Sweden who is attending NSU for one year as a journalism major. She enjoys writing, reading, and traveling in mind or body.

Tabatha Thompson is a sophomore psychology major minoring in English who is currently trying to live life without asking too many questions. She thinks reading Ayn Rand and picking black-eyed susans along lonely highways are two of the better things in life.

George Waguespack is a senior aviation major raised near the Mississippi River.

David Wilkinson is a sophomore theatre major.

Lillian Wooley is a graduate student in English who enjoys school, marriage, and children.



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